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# AN ACCOUNT OF SCHOOLS FOR LIVING ORIENTAL LANGUAGES ESTABLISHED IN EUROPE<sup>1</sup>

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THE MATERIALS for an account of schools of living Oriental languages in Europe are not abundant, and not easily disengaged from others relating to similar movements and undertakings, such as the pursuit of Orientalistic studies in the spirit of philology or exegesis, with emphasis upon the classical languages;<sup>2</sup> or the rigidly classical preparation of men for the work of printing Oriental liturgies and carrying them to the East with missionary enterprise;<sup>3</sup> or the efforts of individuals who followed similar objects, with more or less interest in the spoken idioms, but without producing schools.<sup>4</sup> It is not always possible to learn from the records of early efforts, or of the early stages of existing institutions, whether they might properly be called schools of living Oriental languages. To earn that name a school must, I take it, teach languages actually in use in the Orient,<sup>5</sup> and teach them so that they may be of use. In some of the Oriental departments the classical idiom shades off by many stages into the vernacular, and all have to be studied, as with Arabic in all Arabic-speaking lands. In other departments there

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<sup>1</sup> For a number of years there has been a noticeable tendency in America toward closing the gap between 'Oriental' and European 'Modern' languages, and toward more practical methods of instruction in all languages.

<sup>2</sup> In the Middle Ages Hebrew and Arabic were known to individual Christian scholars who doubtless pursued them in this spirit, though often by very modern methods.

<sup>3</sup> The *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, founded 1622 by Pope Gregory XV, and the *Collegium Urbanum de Propaganda Fide*, founded 1627 by Pope Urban VIII, are devoted to the education of missionaries and the printing of religious books in Oriental languages.

<sup>4</sup> Raymond Lull, a Catalan missionary of the xiii<sup>th</sup> century, proposed that Arabic chairs be established for the training of missionaries, but without immediate effect.

<sup>5</sup> The term 'Orient' with its derivatives has been extended to cover all lands and languages but those of Europe and America.

is little connection between the classical and the vernacular, or none at all, and little or no popular knowledge of the classical, as with Ge'ez and Amharic in Abyssinia, and Coptic and Arabic in Egypt. These languages are dead and belong only secondarily to such a school. Again, if it is the vernacular that is taught, it must be so taught that the successful pupil can use it as well as understand it, know it as well as know about it. Lastly, there are schools devoted to the study of the Orient, or to the training of Orientals in Europe, in which language study is subordinate or non-existent, and which therefore are apart from the present subject.<sup>6</sup>

Humanism, which in its later stages carried the attention of Europe from classical studies over into Semitic, aroused great interest in the *past* of these Oriental lands and their peoples, and gave birth to institutions which down to the present are worthy custodians of that rather antiquarian tradition.<sup>7</sup> But the forces which produced centres of study of the modern Orient were others: mainly *government* and *commerce*, not without the influence, however, of the missions *motif*, already mentioned. How far back in the past these first made themselves felt is difficult to say.<sup>8</sup> In the case of France one is struck with the romantic tone which pervades all her dealings, governmental or otherwise, with the nearer East, her peculiar rapport and inner harmony with it, her intense interest, making her from the first sensitive to the charm of the spoken word, the living population and its lore. How different, on the other hand, has been the attitude of that great custodian Great Britain, and the effect of her contact with the East. A few very great scholars are not lacking.

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<sup>6</sup> As, e. g., the *École pratique coloniale* of Havre, or the *Deutsche Kolonialschule* of Witzenhausen.

<sup>7</sup> The Arabic school of Leyden, and after it that of Oxford, were founded in the xviii century. There seems to have been a school at Rome even before these, in connection with the Medicean Press.

<sup>8</sup> In the xviii century French *jeunes des langues* were sent by the government to the near East. How long this had been going on is seen from Langlès' (*q. v. infra*) statement that the dialogues which he added to Savary's grammar had been used for a long time by dragomans in the Levant. Their fixed form and wide distribution is shown by the further mention of two manuscript copies which Langlès had seen under very different circumstances.

There are queer fraternities among folk who should know better. But no serious and intelligent interest has been displayed, to say nothing of intelligent romanticism, by that government which so well rules its millions of highly interesting Oriental people. The Foreign Office, except in the recent occupation of Palestine, has avoided if not distrusted the orientalist.<sup>9</sup> Germany's interest in the modern Orient, while surely not unromantic, has been, unlike either of the others, a conscious striving for practical political ends through the application of scientific knowledge to technical training. With Russia and Austria we have Oriental interests springing from internal conditions of semi-Oriental states, and their immediate contact with Orientals in neighboring lands.

The first practical school of living Oriental languages established in Europe seems to have been the *Regio Instituto Orientale*, of Naples, begun in 1727 and renewed in 1888.<sup>10</sup> At present<sup>11</sup> it offers Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Modern Greek, Albanian, Amharic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, English, and lectures on Italy's relations with the East.

The second to be established is the *Kaiserliche und Königliche Konsularakademie*, of Vienna, which dates from 1754. Its purpose is expressly the training of consuls for Oriental and Occidental service. It offers Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Chinese, Russian, French, English, Italian, German, and extensive military and juridical *realia*.<sup>12</sup> In 1914 it had fifty-three students.

The third of such schools is the famous *École des langues orientales vivantes*, of Paris. It was established by government decree on March thirtieth, 1795, for the training of consular students and interpreters, other government functionaries, and commercial agents, with duties in the Orient. A beginning was

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<sup>9</sup> The advance through the Holy Land and the taking of Jerusalem were carried out under the direction of scholars advisory to the British Government.

<sup>10</sup> *Minerva*, 1911 and 1914, has been the chief source for these data. In the former will be found full accounts of the history and organization of the institutions.

<sup>11</sup> I. e.: in 1913-14, before the outbreak of the War.

<sup>12</sup> A monument to the interest then shown in Arabic dialects is the *Kurzgefasste Grammatik der Vulgärarabischen Sprache*, 1869, by A. Hassan, then professor of colloquial Arabic.

made with Arabic,<sup>13</sup> Persian,<sup>14</sup> Turkish,<sup>15</sup> and Malay;<sup>15</sup> and in 1832 extensive additions were permitted, leading to the present curriculum including, besides the languages mentioned, the Arabic dialects, Modern Greek, Armenian, Hova, Sudanese, Hindustani, Tamil, Chinese, Japanese, Siamese, Annamite, Javanese, Rumanian, Russian, and *realia*. A reformation and return to first principles was found necessary in 1869, after the work had become rather too philological. Frenchmen of twenty-four years or more who are bachelors of letters or of science are offered admission into the academic section; others, who have not enjoyed university training, are permitted to study in the commercial section. *Répétiteurs*, natives of the respective countries, drill students in sounds, conversation, and reading aloud. The lectures are all *publice et gratis*, and are so arranged as to occur usually three times a week, in two semesters; and attendance by diploma students is strictly required. The director is appointed from the faculty every five years by the Minister of Public Instruction. In 1914 the attendance was fifty students and seventy-five auditors.<sup>16</sup>

The fourth institution of which I find any record is the *Lazarev Ecclesiastical-Academic Institute for Oriental Languages*, of Moscow, which was founded in 1815, and which teaches

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<sup>13</sup> Given by de Sacy.

<sup>14</sup> Given by Dom Raphaël.

<sup>15</sup> Given by Langlès.

<sup>16</sup> The early days of the *École des langues orientales vivantes* have left important literary remains. In 1784 D. Savary presented to the French government for publication a work entitled *Grammatica Linguae Arabicae Vulgaris necnon Litteralis*. It appeared posthumously after many delays, in the year 1813, under the editorship of Langlès, who has been mentioned as Professor of Malay and Turkish. Its importance lies in the fact that it was devoted chiefly to spoken Arabic, that it foreshadowed the modern direct or conversational methods, abounding in materials such as the dialogues above mentioned (n. 8), that it taught a careful pronunciation by means of transliteration, and that it exhibited a thoroughly modern interest in folklore. Some progress over the mixed language of the current dragoon's drill-book (vid. n. 8) was attained through the revision of the latter for Langlès by the Copt Michail Sabbag. In 1810 appeared Sylvestre de Sacy's *Grammaire arabe à l'usage des élèves de l'École spéciale des langues Orientales vivantes*. In its second edition (1831) it became the corner-stone of a great school of Arabic grammar.

the languages of the adjacent Muslim peoples, with law, French and Russian.<sup>17</sup>

The fifth institution to be founded was the *Kaiserlich-Königliche Oeffentliche Lehranstalt für orientalische Sprachen*, of Vienna, dating from 1851. It was reorganized in 1873, and now devotes itself to the practical study of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Serbian, Russian, Greek and Albanian. In 1914 there was an attendance, including ladies, of 216 students.

With the sixth recorded institution Germany appears in 1887. This is the *Seminar für orientalische Sprachen*, in Berlin, best known of them all to American scholars. It is remarkable both for the extent of its curriculum and for the large number of its students and auditors. In 1914 it taught classical Arabic, an introduction to Arabic dialects, Syrian colloquial Arabic, Egyptian colloquial Arabic, Moroccan colloquial Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Hindustani, Gugerati, Chinese, Japanese, Suaheli, Ewe, Jaunde, Ethiopic, Amharic, Russian, Greek, Rumanian, English, French, and Spanish, besides Islam and *realia* of Asiatic and African countries. There were in 1914, including ladies and visitors, 279 students.<sup>18</sup>

The *Königlich-ungarische orientalische Handelsakademie*, of Budapest, founded in 1891 (or in 1883?), possesses a phonetic laboratory, which permits the inference that it offers instruction in living Oriental languages. It offers a two years' course to forty students only.

Eighth on the list is the *Hamburgisches Kolonialinstitut*, founded in 1908,<sup>19</sup> rightly regarded as a model institution. Behind it were the motifs of colonial propaganda within Ger-

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<sup>17</sup> As we learn from the title page of the *Traité de la langue Arabe vulgaire*, by the *Sheikh Mouhammed Ayyad al-Tantavy* (1848), the latter was at that time 'Professeur de langue Arabe à l'Institut des langues Orientales de St. Pétersbourg,' and that he was employed by the Imperial University. It seems probable therefore that the 'Institut' was not a separate institution but a part of the University. There is no record of this in *Minerva*. The 'Oriental Faculty' now offers, besides the dead Oriental languages, Georgian, Armenian, Turko-tatar, Persian, Arabic, Chinese, Mongol, Japanese, and Korean, besides Oriental History.

<sup>18</sup> The *Mitteilungen* and *Lehrbücher* issued by the *Seminar* contain important scientific contributions.

<sup>19</sup> An account of the institution by the present writer will be found in *The Moslem World*, vol. 4, 1914, pp. 303 ff.

many and, quite naturally, German propaganda abroad. It opened its doors to all Germans who were training for foreign service, and to foreign students from all parts of the world. The organization was effected by combining the different *Vorlesungswesen* of Hamburg under the patronage of Edmund Siemers and Alfred Beit, private citizens of that small commercial city-state. Its work is carried on through various seminars, such as the *Seminar für Geschichte und Kunde des Orients* (founded 1908), the *Seminar für Nationalökonomie und Kolonialpolitik* (founded 1908), the *Orientalisches Seminar* (founded 1910), and the *Seminar für Kolonialsprachen*. There is a department of the Moslem Orient, of Eastern Asia, and of Africa, each having a professor, instructors, native assistants, and books and apparatus. The large phonetic laboratory serves all departments, and the ships from foreign ports are able to supply *gewährleute* from many lands. The *realia* include philosophy, jurisprudence, political science, history, geography, cooking, swimming, and a variety of homely arts. The language instruction, except in one department, is of the most modern type, and emphasizes the study of sounds, the appeal to the ear rather than to the eye, and the memorizing of material, rather than the minute analysis of grammatical phenomena. It places the theoretical instruction and general oversight in the hands of a European professor, and the drill work in the hands of European subordinate instructors and foreign *sprachgehülfen*. Recording and reproducing instruments are extensively employed, both for otherwise unavailable material and for the repetition of instruction. The *Hamburgisches Kolonialinstitut* has rendered great service to German *realpolitik* and German commerce. Its strongest feature has been the department of African languages headed by Carl Meinhoff, the founder of a remarkable school of Hamitic philology.<sup>20</sup> It is safe to say that there is nowhere else in the world any such equipment for the practical and theoretical study of African languages.

The ninth institution to be mentioned is the *Practical Oriental Academy*, of Petrograd, founded in 1909, after it had developed

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<sup>20</sup> The Hamburg school devotes itself largely, though not entirely, to those African languages which Meinhoff classifies as Hamitic. The Sudanic languages have found a specialist representative in Westermann of the Berlin *Seminar für orientalische Sprachen*.

out of various courses begun by the *Imperial Society for Oriental Studies*, which dates from 1906. It offers, besides the Moslem and Christian languages to the south, also those to the east, including Chinese and Japanese; but also French and English, and the general subjects: Islam, geography, Oriental jurisprudence, international politics, and administrative science. The course runs but two semesters. In 1913 there were 102 students.

Last of all the European powers and peoples to become interested in practical instruction in living Oriental languages have been the British government and the English people.<sup>21</sup> As the tenth and last of the establishments is to be mentioned *The School of Oriental Studies, London Institution*, founded on February 23, 1917. Its charter of incorporation states that the purposes of the school are: 'to be a school of Oriental Studies in the University of London, to give instruction in the languages of Eastern and African peoples, ancient and modern, and in the literature, history, religion, and customs of these peoples, especially with a view to the needs of persons about to proceed to the East or to Africa for the pursuit of study and research, commerce, or a profession.' It is hardly fair to ask what has been accomplished by this school, born in the most desperate crisis of modern civilization. It is product of the War, a symbol of changed or changing policy, and a promise for the future. Fortunate it is for Great Britain and for all, that Germany's failure and fall were not attributed to her excellent technical training, nor Britain's conspicuous success attributed to her comparative lack of the same.

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<sup>21</sup> An account of the long struggle for recognition of the claims of these studies in England will be found in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, London Institution*, published by the School, Finsbury Circus, E. C., 1917. John B. Gilchrist in 1818 founded in Leicester Square the *Oriental Institution*, under the patronage of the East India Company and chiefly devoted to the study of Hindustani by medical students; but it survived only eight years. Dr. Robert Morrison's *Language Institution*, London, teaching Chinese, Sanskrit, and Bengali, was founded in 1825 and lived only three years. Of course *University College* and *King's College* have taught Hindustani, Arabic, and other Oriental languages since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Under the title *School of Modern Oriental Languages*, courses of instruction in Arabic, Persian, Pali, Sanskrit, Hindustani, Bengali, Marathi, and Tamil, are given in University College, and Burmese, Modern Greek, Chinese, Russian, Turkish, Swahili, Malay, Japanese, Arabic, Haura, Zulu and South African Languages in King's College.